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Tender Invitation,

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A L L P E O P L E,

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Embrace the Offers of GOD's LOVE,
and to break off from those Things
which provoke Him to Anger, before
the Day of their *Visitation* be over.

W I T H A

Word of C O M F O R T

To those who are *Mourning* because of
the *Wickedness* that abounds amongst
M A N K I N D.

L O N D O N :

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7/19



A TENDER INVITATION
and CALL to all People,
to imbrace the Offers of
G O D's Love, &c.

STRONG and Fervent are the Desires that are in my Soul, that you may be prevailed upon to embrace the Day of God's Merciful Visitation, which is extended unto your Souls through Jesus Christ our Lord; that so the Complaint that was taken up against *Jerusalem* of Old, may not be taken up against any of you: For we find, that such was the Kindness of the Lord to the People of that great City, that He would often have *Gathered* them, but they would not be *Gathered*, although the Lord in Kindness and Mercy sent his Servants and Prophets amongst them, to call them to break off from their Wickedness: Yet such was their Hardness and Impenitency, that they *killed the Prophets*, and *Stoned* them that were sent of God to call unto them for Repentance and Amendment of Life; and that which was

greatly to be lamented, they persisted on in their Wickedness to that Degree, that the Lord gave over striving with them; and when their Day of Visitation was over, our Saviour Wept over them, and said, *Ob Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as an Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not: Behold your House is left unto you desolate,* A very dismal State indeed! I fervently desire, that this may never be the State of any: And in order that it may not, I beseech you, in the Love of Christ, to break off from your Sins by true and unfeigned Repentance, while the Lord in his Mercy and Kindness is inwardly striving with you, by his Holy Spirit, to reclaim you from them. For such is the Kindness and Mercy of the Almighty God unto all Mankind, that he gives to every Man a Day of Visitation, in which Day of Visitation He is graciously pleased to strive with them inwardly by his Holy Spirit. The Lord strove with the People in the Old World by his Spirit, to reclaim them; but after he had long striven with them, and they would not be reclaimed from their Wicked and Evil Doings, he said concerning them, *That his Spirit should not always strive with Man, for that he also is Flesh,* Gen. 6. 3. And you may find, how, through persisting on in their Wickedness, they provoked the Lord to sweep them away in his Anger, they went on in those things that

that provoked the Lord to Anger: but did not truly consider what would be the Consequence of their so doing; they did so little consider how near they were to perish in their Iniquities, that the Scripture saith, *They eat, and drank, and married, and were given in Marriage, until the Day that Noah entred into the Ark,* Mat. 21. 38.

And as in other things, so in that of Marriage, they did mightily provoke the Lord to Anger; for it's said, *The Sons of God took to themselves Wives of the Daughters of Men, of all which they chose.* And the Consequence thereof was very dismal, for they were cut off in Anger, who thus provoked the Lord by Marrying out of his Counsel, contrary to his Mind, as well as the rest of the Wicked. Oh! that this might be Warning to all to be careful, that they do not provoke the Lord, by Marrying out of his Counsel, lest he turn his Hand in Judgment against them, as he did against those People in the old World. And we may Read in the Book of *Ezra*, Chap. 9. how that the fierce Wath of the Lord was come upon *Israel*, because they had taken to themselves *strange Wives*.

Now, these are things of great weight, and I desire they may be truly considered, for he that was provoked with the People in the old World, and with the *Jews* for their Wicked and Ungodly Doings, he is provoked with many of the People in this our Day, because of their Wicked and Ungodly Doings, for which he will assuredly punish them in

an heavy Manner, if they do not repent, and return from their Evil Ways, while the Day of his merciful Visitation is extended unto them; for he hath whet his Sword, and bent his Bow, and he will be avenged on the workers of Iniquity.

Therefore I call unto you from a Concern that I am under for your Eternal Welfare, to prepare to meet the Lord, while the Day of his Mercy is extended unto you, lest a Day of Calamity and Sorrow overtake you; for the Lord is highly provoked (and his Spirit grieved) with the Wickedness that doth abound in this Generation, and he will bring a Day of Great Humiliation and Sorrow upon many, if they do not speedily Repent, and return from the Evil of their Ways. Oh! how many of the provoking Sins of *Sodom* do abound in this age, for which God will assuredly visit Mankind in his sore Displeasure, if they will not answer his Call, which is to come out of them.

Therefore be entreated for your Souls Eternal Welfare, to answer when the Lord calls, lest the time come that you call, and he will not answer, which will be dreadful. See *Proverbs*, Chap. I. from Vers. 24, to Vers. 30. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof: I also will Laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as Desolation, and your Destruction cometh as a Whirlwind,*

*Whirlwind ; when Distress and Anguish come
upon you : yea, then shall they call upon me, but I
will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but
they shall not find me, for that they hated Know-
ledge, and did not chuse the Fear of the
Lord.*

So it is plainly manifest, the Lord will not always strive with Man: He strove long with the People of *Israel*, that went into Evil things; but when they still persisted, and would not be reclaimed, you may find how He turned his Hand in Judgment against those very People, that he had chosen above all the People of the Earth. So that the Apostle saith, That *Three and Twenty Thousand of them fell in one Day*: and he gives the Reason why they fell, *i. e. Because they lusted after Evil Things*. Oh! that the Children of Men in our time would but make a right Application of these things: For if the Lord turned his Hand in Judgment against those that were once his peculiar and chosen People, when they lusted after Evil things, how can they expect other, but that God will turn his Hand in Judgment against them, if they Lust after Evil things, as they did? As was said unto *Israel*, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* so say I unto you, Turn ye, turn ye from your Evil Ways, why will you die? Why will you go on, and persist in that which provokes the Lord to Anger, and so bring Misery upon your Souls to all Eternity? If you will turn to the Lord with all your Hearts, He will have Mercy; for He is Gracious and

Ezek 33
11.

Merciful, and will abundantly Pardon; as was said of Old, *Isaiab. Chap. 55. Vers. 7. Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the Unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly Pardon.*

It is not turning from one Profession of Religion to another, that will turn away the Wrath of the Lord from Men, if they do not turn away from their Iniquities: So I beseech you, into whose Hands these may come, to see that you turn from that which grieves the Lord, that so you may escape the Wrath to come, and turn to that Divine Light, by which every Man that cometh into the World is enlightened, (*John 1.*) which Light gives a Discovery of, and brings Trouble and Sorrow upon Men for that which is Evil, during the Day of their Visitation; in which Divine Light, there is Power and Sufficiency to give the Soul Victory over all that which is Evil, where People come to believe in it, and walk in it: In which Holy Light, *all the Nations of them that are saved must walk*: For it is certain, that when Men go into that, which they are inwardly reprov'd for by the Light of Christ in their own Hearts, they displease God. So see that you come out of those things, that the Light inwardly discovers to be Evil, and secretly reprov's you for, or else you will not be Justified in the Sight of God, although you may be high in Profession, and strict in observing a great many out-ward

ward Observations: For it is not Mens high Pretences to Religion, or their being strict in observing of a great many outward Ceremonies, that will render them acceptable in God's Sight, if they are such as Rebel against the Light, and Holy Spirit of God in their own Hearts.

I beseech you seriously to consider, what signified all the *Jews* outward Observations and Ceremonies, when they Rebelled against the Holy Spirit of God in their own Hearts; for God gave them of his good Spirit to Instruct them; but that which was their great Unhappiness, they rebelled against it, and then to what purpose was the Multitude of their Sacrifices: for he saith, *Bring no more vain Oblations, Incense is Abomination unto me, the New Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with; it is Iniquity, even the Solemn Meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed Feasts my Soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them: And when you spread forth your Hands, I will hide mine Eyes from you; yea, when ye make many Prayers I will not hear. Your Hands are full of Blood; wash ye, make you clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes; cease to do Evil, learn to do well; seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; though they be Red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool; If you be willing*
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and obedient, ye shall eat the Good of the Land; but if ye Refuse and Rebel, ye shall be devoured with the Sword: for the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, Isaiah, Chap. I. from Vers. 13, to Vers. 21.

So, see all you Professors, what Name of Religion soever you go under, that you do not value your selves upon your Profession, or upon your Outward Observations, and Empty Performances; for you may find by what is aforesaid, that the Observations of the *Jews* did not avail in the Sight of God, when they were found in those things that grieved Him: although he had once required the Performance of those outward Solemnities and Observations, as aforesaid. And I say to you, That all your outward Observations and Ceremonies will not avail in the Sight of God; for nothing short of knowing the Lord to work a Change in the Heart, will avail in his Sight, as the Apostle *Paul* well observes, that *he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision which is outward in the Flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and Circumcision is of the Heart, Rom. 2. 28, 29.*

And as *Paul* saith concerning the *Jew*, so it may be truly said concerning the *Christian*, that he is not a true and real Christian, that is one outwardly, although he may observe a great many outward Ceremonies, if he is not one inwardly in his Heart to the Lord; for the Baptism that saves (as saith the Apostle *Peter*, Chap. 3. Vers. 21.) is not the putting

ting away the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, That which is really needful for Men to know, is the Work of Sanctification in their Hearts, that they may know their Hearts to be purified, and made clean by the Baptism of Christ, which is with the Holy Ghost, Mark Chap. 1. Vers. 8. that so they may be fitted for that Kingdom, into which nothing that is unclean can enter. Know ye not, saith the Apostle 1 Cor. 6. 9. and 11. that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are Justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. This is the great thing that is wanting in this our Day, for Men to be cleansed from their Corruptions, and to be brought to keep the Commandments of God; for the Apostle in the next Chapter saith, That Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the Commandments of God. So that it is not whether a Man observes this outward Observation, or the other, or whether he doth not, that will avail; but the keeping of the Commandments of God; And Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter.

enter in through the Gate into the Holy City.

And such is the Wonderful Goodness, and Mercy of God unto Mankind, that he hath given so much of his Grace and Holy Spirit, as is sufficient to enable them to keep his Commands, according to the Apostles Testimony, *Tit. 2. 11.* which Grace is sufficient to give the Soul Victory over all that which is Evil, and to enable it to do all that the Lord requires of it.

You that are Parents of Children, I tenderly entreat you to mind this Divine Grace, that inwardly appears in your Hearts, and in the Hearts of all People, against all that which is Evil, that so by taking heed thereunto, you may be a Blessing in the Lord's Hand to your Children.

And all you Young People, into whose Hands these may come, let me prevail with you, to join with this Holy and Divine Grace of God in your own Hearts, which will teach you true Humility and Self-denial, and it will preserve you from all the Evils that are in the World; and if you keep to it, and mind the Teachings of it, as you ought to do, you will witness the Blessing of the Lord, which makes truly Rich, and adds no Sorrow with it, to rest upon you, and your Peace and Comfort will be beyond what you will be able to express in Words.

Oh! how my Soul desires and travails, that All may come to join with, and be taught by this Divine Grace, that so thereby they may
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be Taught to deny all Ungodliness, and Worldly Lusts, and to live Soberly and Righteously, and Godly in this present World; that so thereby they may be brought into Favour with God, for the Lord is greatly provoked to Displeasure, because of the Wickedness, and Unrighteousness that doth abound amongst People pretending to Christianity.

Oh! Consider that you are accountable to Almighty God, not only for gross Sins, as Swearing, Lying, Uncleanness, and wasting of the good Creatures of God upon your Lusts, but remember, That for every Idle Word you speak, you must give an Account thereof in the Day of Judgment. Oh! that the Sense thereof might weightily seize upon all Hearts, that so there might be a true and thorough Repentance come unto amongst Mankind; that the Lord, who in tender Mercy and Kindness, look'd down upon the *Ninevites*, upon their Repenting, and humbling of themselves before Him, may be pleased to look down in his Mercy upon the People in this Age.

AND now, *Dear Friends*, You whom the Lord, in the Riches of his Love, has graciously Visited with his Blessed Day-spring from on High, see that you daily live in a Holy Sense of his Goodness and Mercy extended unto you through Jesus Christ his Beloved Son, that so you may walk in great Humility and Fear before him, the Days you have here to sojourn, that it may please Him
who

who hath done great things for you, to do yet more abundantly for you, that the Complaint that was taken up against the Vineyard of Old, may never be taken up against any of you: read *Isaiah* the 5th. For it is certain, that after such Singular Favours and Kindness extended many Ways, the Lord expects Fruits of Holiness from us: Therefore consider, what Returns you are making to the Almighty, and see that your Fruits are unto Holiness, that the End may be Everlasting Life: For we find, although the People of *Israel* were favoured above all other People; yet because they went into Evil things, they were to be punished above all other People. Therefore have a care that you join not with the Wicked, in those Things which are displeasing unto God; but be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing in any kind; and then the Lord will receive you, and his Care will be over you: So that if he brings his Judgments in an heavy manner upon the Wicked because of their Wickedness, He will be a Wall of Salvation round about you, to defend you, so that nothing shall hurt you: But if any of you go into Pride, or those things that displease the Lord, and will not be reclaimed, while he mercifully strives with you, he will assuredly lay his Hand in Judgment upon you.

And now to you that are Mourning in Soul before the Lord, because of the Wickedness that doth abound amongst Mankind, it is in my Heart to say unto you, for your Comfort,

fort, The Lord in a Peculiar Manner has regard unto you, and when his Hand will be heavy upon the Wicked, His Care will be great over you, as it hath been over his People throughout all Ages of the World.

We read, that the Lord's Care was great over *Noah* (and those other Righteous Persons that were in the Old World) to preserve him, and his Household, when his Judgment was Executed upon the Wicked. And when the Lord destroyed the *Sodomites*, because of their great Sins, he had regard unto Just *Lot*, and those of his Family who hearkened unto him, and preserved them alive. And when he sent the Six Men unto *Jerusalem*, who had Slaughter Weapons, and one Man among them with a Writers Inkhorn by his Side; as we may read in *Ezekiel*, Chap. 9, Vers. 2, & 4. He that had the Writers *Ink-horn*, was to go through *Jerusalem*, and to set a Mark upon them that Sighed and Cryed for the Abominations that were Committed amongst them, and those that had the Mark set upon them, the Destroyers, with their Destroying Weapons were not to hurt them.

So be Encouraged, whoever you are that go bowed down, and sorrowful on your Way, and are ready to say, *Oh! that we had a Weeping place in the Wilderness, or that our Heads were Waters, and our Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that we might weep Day and Night, because of the Wickedness that doth abound amongst the Children of Men.* The Lord's Eye is upon you for good, and when Days of
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great Calamity and Sorrow shall overtake the Wicked, the Lord will abundantly Comfort you. Therefore be you encouraged to look unto Him, in whom you have Believed, and he will support you by his Almighty Power, and in the End give you a Crown of Glory, that will not fade away: Which, that you may, through a faithful following of the Lord, obtain, is the sincere Desire of one, that desires the Salvation of all Mankind,

Benjamin Holme.

*Dublin, the 20th of
the 1st Mo. 1713.*

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